



Garlic

There are two basic classes of garlic: hardneck and softneck. Softneck varieties store very well, are braidable and easy to grow. The hardnecks have larger, richer cloves and are easier to peel.

- PLANTING:** Garlic is best planted in Sept.-Nov., but there is also a planting window from February to March which yields smaller heads. Separate the cloves just prior to planting, but don't peel them, those skins will help prevent rot. Plant cloves 1" to 2" deep, root side down, pointed tip up. Space plants 6-8" apart with rows 6-8" apart.
- CULTURE:** Full sun. Well drained, light, loamy soil rich in organic matter. Keep soil moist while the plant is growing new leaves. Let the soil dry as the leaves turn brown.
- GROWING:** Keep well weeded. Side dress in March with cotton seed meal or blood meal. Another option is a foliar-spray fertilizer, such as Alaska Fish Fertilizer, every 10-14 days, starting in March. When summer arrives, garlic stops making new leaves and starts forming bulbs. Once bulbing begins (~6/15), stop fertilizing and decrease watering. As the bulbs mature, the leaves turn brown from the bottom of the plant up. Stop watering when 7-8 green leaves remain. In years with a wet June, it may be that a fall planted garlic crop never needs water. Hardneck varieties put up a tall, woody, flowering stalk that usually grows bulblets at top. **CUT FLOWER STALKS OFF** as soon as the stem has reached 8-9" tall or made one full curl, this will redirect energy to the bulb.
- HARVESTING:** When there are 4-6 green leaves remaining, dig up one plant, or dig a small hole to check soil moisture. If dry 4-6" deep, let plants continue browning until only 2 green leaves remain. If wet in the top 4-6", dig plants now and begin curing.
- CURING:** With the leaves and stem still attached, hang plants in a place with excellent airflow but no direct sun, perhaps under an eave or on a covered porch. Slatted shelves or screens can also work. Cure for 6-8 weeks then trim the roots and stem and move to storage.
- STORAGE:** Hang garlic in netted sacks, or make and hang braids of the softneck types so there is air circulation on all sides. Perfect storage conditions are 45-55°F at 50% relative humidity. Keeping garlic below 40°F actually makes it sprout.

Garlic Groups

HARD NECK

CREOLE GROUP: Cultivated in Spain by the Conquistadors. This group of garlic is superb for fresh eating with an initial sweet flavor that builds in heat. They have 8-12 cloves per head. White wrappers reveal a red to purple clove. Tolerant of adverse weather conditions especially in hot climates. Weak flower stalks. Extremely attractive heads.

PORCELAIN GROUP: Produces the largest cloves with the fewest cloves per bulb, 2-5 cloves per bulb. Buff-colored w/purple-rose striping, easy to peel and use. Excellent storage for a hardneck variety. Considered the most flavorful garlic without heat.

PURPLE-STRIPE GROUP: Nicely shaped bulbs with 8-12 tall, pointy cloves around a single stem. Cloves generally are the same size within a single bulb. Red-purple to brownish clove coverings. Plants can be very tall. Medium storage; 4-6 months.

ROCAMBOLE GROUP: Round, nicely shaped bulbs w/purple splashed coverings. 6-10 cloves per bulb around a central woody stem. Easy to peel. Robust, rich, earthy-tasting garlic. Best flavor, but shortest storage time of all the garlic groups.

TURBAN GROUP: Often this group is considered a subgroup of Asiatic garlic. Slow to bolt and an earlier harvest than other varieties. Turban garlic has an instantly hot flavor. Turban garlic is unique in that it can be a softneck in mild winter climates.

SOFT NECK

ARTICHOKE GROUP: The most common of all the garlic. Easy to grow, productive, large bulbs with good storage characteristics. The least flavor of any garlic, but very strong heat. Adaptable to any climate.

SILVERSKIN GROUP: Slightly harder to grow than other soft necks, but highly productive. Taller cloves w/more pinkish-rose coloring. Number one for braiding because of their long storage capabilities and bright white skins. Usually the last garlic to harvest. Generally hot and strong flavor.

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